



**GREENE COUNTY
VETERANS SERVICE
AGENCY**

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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VISION STATEMENT

Greene County Veterans Service Agency is dedicated to providing the highest quality of service to the Veterans and their families.

MISSION

- Educate Greene County Veterans and their eligible or advocating family members, about the various benefits Veterans have earned
- Represent and guide our Veterans and their eligibly family members, in obtaining benefits and services through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, and other state, local, community, and private sources
- Make our Veterans an economic force through education, employment and business development

SUMMARY

Our Agency provided services to approximately 13,000 veterans, veteran family members and veterans' advocates in 2019; with an estimate of at least 3800 veterans currently claiming primary residence in Greene County. Our full time staff included our Director, one Veterans Benefits Representative, one Senior Clerk, and one Veterans Services Driver. All of our programs and services are provided directly through our agency; while, all benefits and payments received by our clients are provided directly from federal and state sources. The operating cost of this agency for 2019, continued at less than 1% of the total federal, health, education, pension, life insurance, and low income pension benefits received by Greene Veterans and their eligible family members, per annum; or, approximately \$260,300.00 budgetary transactions (including approximately \$28k for Vietnam Travelling Wall) to \$29,450,000.00 Federal Expenditures to/for Greene County veterans and dependents. (va.gov data and statistics).

The Agency goals for 2019 were:

- Continue eliminating unnecessary paper files – Progress continues
- Continue to digitize the remaining sections of approximately 13,000 existing paper files – Progress continues
- Continue to increase overall productivity, ensuring as many Greene County veterans as possible are aware of and obtaining their VA and other veterans benefits under our representation – Steady uptick in contacts and benefits requests
- Continue to streamline interagency services, by coordinating with other local agencies and departments who refer clients – Progress continues
- Continue to partner with local businesses and the County Clerk in maintaining and expanding the Greene County Return the Favor Program – Added three new businesses to FAVOR program
- Proudly honor two deserving veterans in our Honor a Vet Memorial and Veteran of the Year ceremonies --
- Honor our veterans with a monumental and historic event

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

- VA Disability Compensation Claim Representation
 - Represent veteran clients against the Department of Veterans Affairs in Disability Compensation claims
 - Provide guidance to veterans obtaining necessary medical evidence
 - Develop and submit each claim to American Legion Department Service Officer for review
 - Submit accepted claims to the appropriate Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office for rating or approval

PROGRAMS & SERVICES (CONT)

- Interact with Congressional office to ensure all viable claims are accurately rated
- VA Educational Benefits
 - Assist veterans in obtaining their Certificate of Eligibility for the GI Bill
 - Assist eligible veterans' dependents in applying for Chapter 35 Survivor and Dependents Assistance for Education
 - Advise veterans of potential education benefits for self and dependents
 - Advise higher education institutions of CFR Title 38 Part III Chapters 30 through 36 regulations as necessary
- VA Pension Claim Representation
 - Represent eligible wartime veteran clients or their surviving spouses in VA Disability Pension claims
 - Assist veteran, family members and advocates in obtaining necessary financial information
 - Assist same in obtaining necessary medical information
 - Develop and submit claims to American Legion Department Service Officer for review
 - Submit accepted claims to the appropriate Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office for approval
- VA Healthcare and Enrollment
 - Guide veterans through application process
 - Provide explanation of benefits
 - Assist veterans in disclosing their financials to the VA
 - Screen applicants for potential VA Disability Compensation claims

PROGRAMS & SERVICES (CONT)

- Assist veterans who were denied VA Healthcare
- Help veterans navigate VA Healthcare benefits and billing
- Advocate for veterans who are not receiving appropriate care at VA medical facilities
- County Veterans Transportation Program
 - Provide daily (weekday) transportation for county veterans to VA medical facilities
 - Pick up and drop off veterans at their homes
 - Provide transportation as requested for disability compensation assistance
 - Transport veterans after hours or weekends for special events as requested
 - Create and maintain eligibility requirements and standard operating procedure
 - Ensure vehicles, staff, and services meet all federal, state and local standards
- Events
 - Hold two Honor a Vet Ceremonies each year
 - One memorial ceremony in May for a chosen deceased veteran
 - One Veteran of the Year Ceremony in November for the chosen living veteran
 - Supervise a nine member panel of committee members
 - Create and disseminate submission packets annually
 - Review and assess submissions for accuracy and eligibility
 - Coordinate with Buildings and Grounds, Sheriff's Department, Catskill Police Department, and Greene County Courthouse for location set up and traffic control.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES (CONT)

- Coordinate with local entertainers, clergy, and veterans service and other organizations to ensure each ceremony is tailored to the honoree and his/her local community
- Other Veterans Events
- Coordinate with Greene County Agencies and Departments
 - Coordinate with County Clerk's office in obtaining and submitting veterans discharge documents
 - Coordinate county's Return the Favor program, periodically canvassing local businesses to provide discounts to area veterans and/or update their existing offers with County Clerk's office who maintains accurate listing

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Personnel

GCVSA Director	04/11/2011 to present
Veterans Benefits Representative	06/25/2018 to present
Senior Clerk	11/12/2019 to present
Veterans Service Assistant	11/12/2019 to 07/23/2019
Veterans Service Driver – Full Time	10/11/2011 to 06/19/2020
Veterans Services Driver – Part Time	Vacant
Veterans Service Chauffeur – Part Time	Vacant
Veterans Service Chauffeur – Per Diem	06/09/2020 - present
Honor a Veteran Committee Chairman (Volunteer)	01/01/2019 to present

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

COMPARATIVE OPERATING EXPENSES		
	2019	2018
Salaries	\$176,785.33	\$154,354.98
Rent	\$25,898.96	\$25,233.64
Office Supplies	\$2,547.38	\$2,987.13
Postage	\$629.07	\$160.13
Repairs	\$119.94	\$27.64
Travel	\$8,826.63	\$14,862.70
Other personnel expenses	\$43,268.36	\$73,108.42
Events	\$27,928.08	\$747.76
Vehicle Insurance	\$2,482.50	\$2,546.87
IC/IT	\$2,583.41	\$2,591.98
Total	\$291,069.66	\$276,720.53
NYS Reimbursement	\$10,000.00	\$8,529.00
Donations	\$20,789.38	
Total Op Costs	(\$260,280.28)	(\$268,191.53)

CLAIMS & BENEFITS

Claims Filed Directly By Greene County Veterans Service Agency Staff

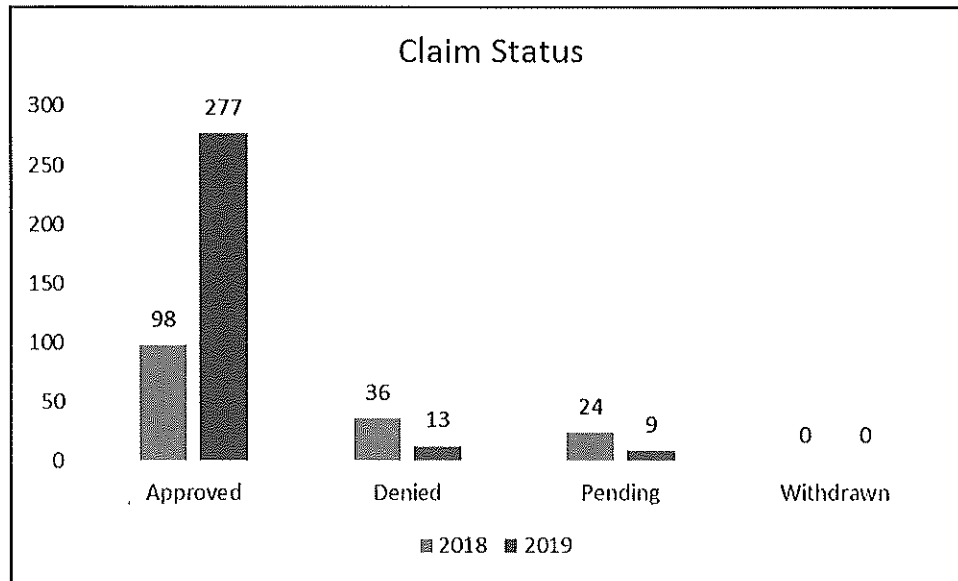


Figure 1

Due to a high rate of personnel changeover affecting the 2018 calendar year; there were unpredicted shortfalls in data keeping as well claims oversight. These departmental issues have been remedied with reliable staff and appropriate training.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS (CONT)

**FY 18 & FY19
SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES (IN\$000'S)**

■ FY 18 ■ FY 19

	FY 18	FY 19
UNIQUE PATIENTS *	1,111	1,201
MEDICAL CARE	\$15,182	\$17,271
INSURANCE & INDEMNITIES	\$151	\$100
GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES		
LOAN GUARANTY		
EDUCATION & VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION/ EMPLOYMENT	\$926	\$960
CONSTRUCTION		
COMPENSATION & PENSION	\$9,762	\$11,129
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$26,022	\$29,160
VETERAN POPULATION	3,528	3,418

Figure 2

Department of Veterans Affairs expenditures show a steep increase to nearly \$30 million, with over a \$2 million increase in medical care expenditures, and a very satisfying \$3.4 million increase in total Compensation and Pension expenditures to Greene County’s disabled veterans; even while, we show a slight decline in our overall veteran population. These expenditures directly correlate with the outstanding work of our Veterans Benefits Representative, Tyler Lynch, who truly stepped up to the plate to assist this Department in restoring our high standard of care for Greene County Veterans of that past decade and more.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS (CONT)

FY2017 FY2018 VA Disability Compensation and Pension Recipients: Greene County

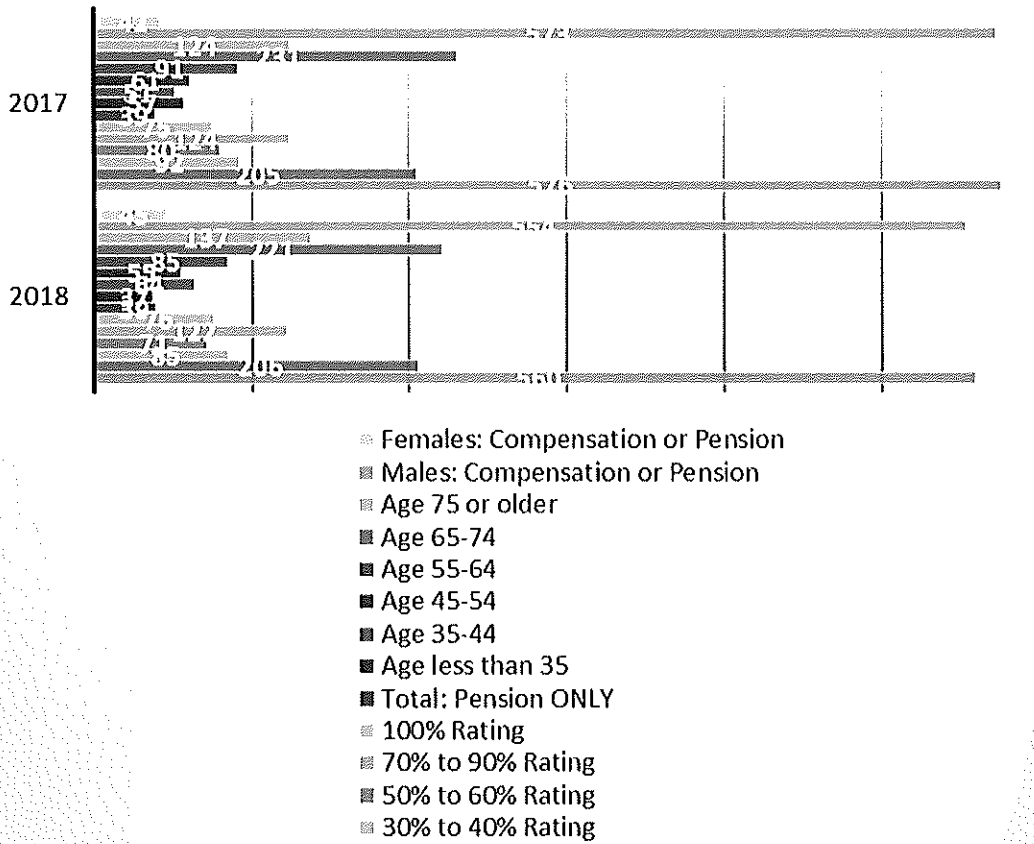


Figure 3

STATISTICAL REPORTS (CONT)

2019	Claims Filed	World War II	Korea	Vietnam	Persian Gulf	Afghanistan	Other	Veteran	Dependent/Other	Telephone	Walk-In	Mail	Fax	NYSDVA	Other
Jan	11	47	52	110	51	30	121	125	174	128	87	53	31	71	228
Feb	17	35	32	105	43	26	87	90	154	130	58	25	31	35	209
Mar	25	35	38	111	44	11	83	118	132	116	68	34	32	17	233
Apr	39	32	12	97	43	12	79	98	129	70	67	50	40	10	217
May	27	37	50	80	55	9	93	91	186	112	56	64	45	7	270
Jun	18	53	25	75	30	5	68	64	168	93	56	50	33	0	232
Jul	27	42	29	96	32	22	88	94	158	94	74	50	34	1	250
Aug	21	88	41	100	43	26	99	91	218	112	72	62	63	0	309
Sep	39	30	30	95	30	16	83	77	143	70	49	58	43	0	220
Oct	18	26	38	119	30	15	102	82	168	101	54	50	45	0	250
Nov	18	46	24	94	58	12	89	67	154	94	39	58	30	0	221
Dec	17	15	15	47	16	6	46	38	78	51	24	25	17	0	117
TOTALS	277	486	386	1129	475	190	1038	1035	1862	1171	704	579	444	141	2756

2019	Disability Compensation	Pension	Healthcare	Education	Insurance	Home Loan	Burial	Medals	Military Records	Gold Star Parent Annuity	Blind Annuity	Supplemental Burial	Education	Home Loan	Park Passes	Hunting/Fishing License	Employment	State Vets Home	Medals	Property Tax	Other
Jan	133	96	34	5	6	4	18	7	49	3	3	3	5	4	3	3	9	5	7	8	20
Feb	93	65	41	7	8	8	17	13	38	5	5	5	7	8	6	6	5	5	13	11	28
Mar	94	45	49	4	7	6	38	4	46	1	1	1	4	6	1	1	3	1	4	8	13
Apr	107	33	27	4	0	4	18	3	55	0	0	0	4	4	2	2	0	0	3	2	9
May	115	58	6	1	0	1	63	0	54	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	8
Jun	58	30	30	4	0	3	65	0	51	0	2	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Jul	62	43	40	5	5	8	40	2	67	0	0	0	5	8	0	0	0	2	2	0	7
Aug	80	75	36	4	0	5	45	1	77	0	7	0	4	5	3	0	1	0	1	6	6
Sep	97	32	16	5	2	6	27	4	49	0	3	0	5	6	0	0	2	2	4	0	8
Oct	85	19	42	2	3	0	51	2	73	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	3	11
Nov	70	44	32	2	0	0	22	0	70	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	6
Dec	40	21	13	1	0	1	24	0	44	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	5
TOTALS	1034	561	366	44	31	46	428	36	673	9	26	9	44	46	15	12	24	15	36	43	128

Figure 3

STATISTICAL REPORTS (CONT)

Figure 4

TRANSPORTATION

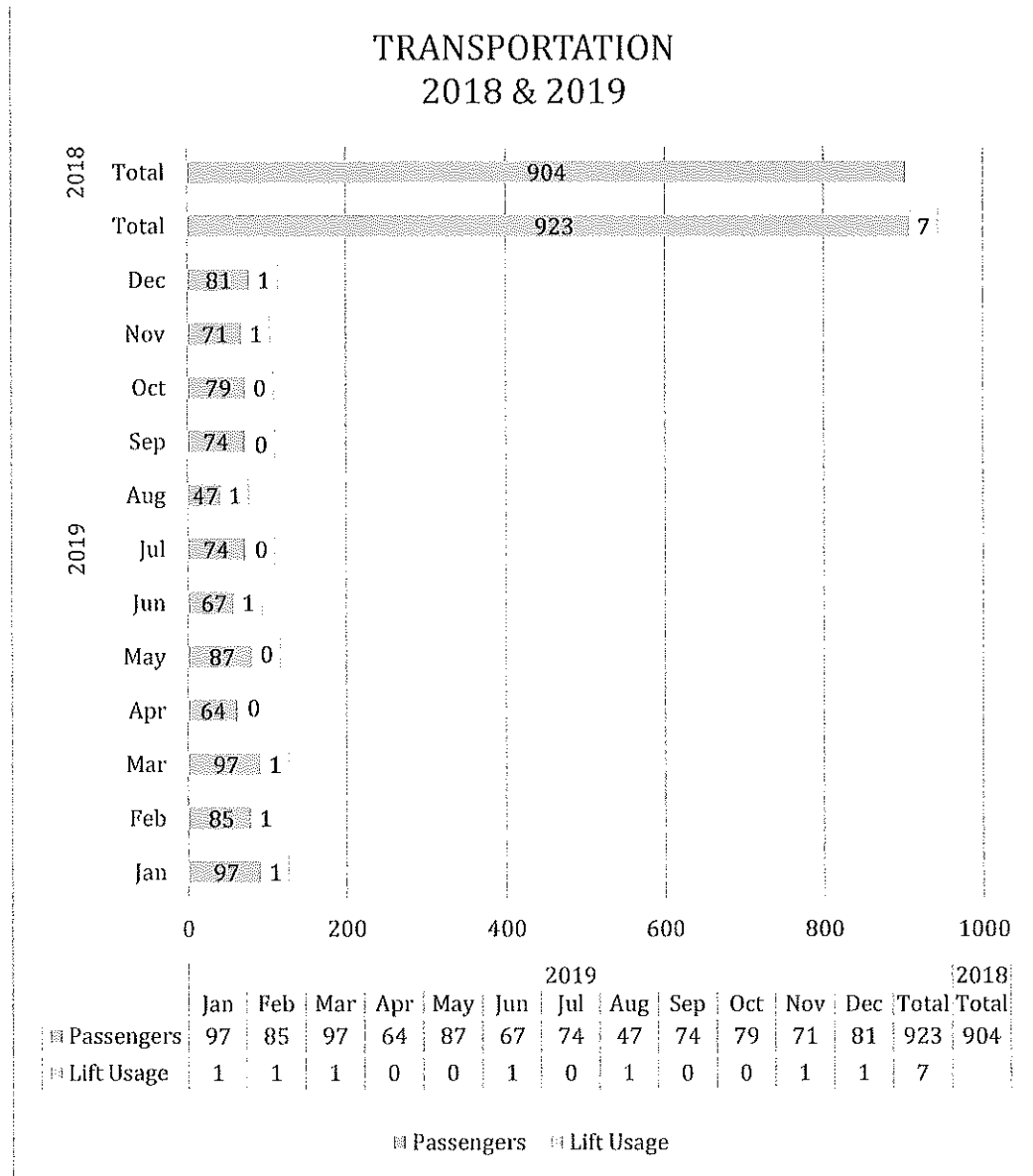


Figure 5

STATISTICAL REPORTS (CONT)

We maintain a fleet of three vehicles: 2006 Ford Focus, 2010 Chevy Van, 2016 Ford Transit Van with Wheelchair Lift. Our overall transportation service increased slightly between 2018 and 2019; but not significantly. We did not see the typical “snowbird” ebb and flow in 2019. We did see a decline in patronage for the month of August, due to repurposing our services for the Vietnam Travelling Wall Display. This service is provided to ensure our Veterans are able to obtain healthcare provided by the federal government, at little to no direct cost to our Veterans, and at no cost to Greene County.

OPERATION GREENE HOLIDAY

The Operation Greene Holiday mission for 2019, was to assist a local veteran in need. We were able to raise approximately \$1200 in donations made directly to the veteran from our veterans service organizations and individual donors. Additionally, we assisted the NYS Chapter 13 of the Blue Star Mothers, by facilitating monetary and in-kind donations to their Operation Holiday Packages for the Troops.

EVENTS

In 2019, we successfully honored two Greene County Veterans, WWII Purple Heart Veteran, Michael J. Gabriele was honored in memoriam on May 18th; and, long-time Greene County Honor a Vet member, outstanding American Legion volunteer, Korean War Veteran, Robert F. Gurley was recognized on November 2nd as the Greene County Veteran of the year.

Additionally, in 2019, Greene County Veterans Service Agency, in collaboration with multiple Greene County Government departments, hosted the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall. For Greene County Veterans, this project began in September 2018 in

EVENTS (cont)

partnership with a private citizen and local US Navy Veteran, Duane Keezer. Mr. Keezer had taken the initial step to tentatively reserve the dates for the Veterans of Broward County to bring the Wall.

Upon debriefing Mr. Keezer, this Agency recognized the importance and proportions of this event as such that required a massive support system; and, we took our idea to the County Administrator. With half the time for planning than our neighbors to the south had for their event the year prior, our counterpart highly recommended we attempt to reschedule our event for at least a year later!

However, Greene County Veterans was determined not to disappoint our Vietnam Veterans and Gold Star Families; by keeping this event on the books for 2019. We assembled a committee of nearly all Greene Government departments, with our GIS specialist taking the lead on plotting locations to determine the best possible location to erect the temporary monument; and, Tourism staff taking the lead on public affairs and advertising, and permitting, the Treasurer's Office took the lead on fundraising and receipts of donations from local business and private donors, which totaled over \$20k; our Sheriff's Department, Emergency Services as well as state and local Police Departments, local Fire Departments and EMS agencies, worked hand in hand with the local Chapter of the Protectors LEMC to coordinate the Escort Ride and all security throughout the event. Once we had our location and a solid plan in effect; Buildings and Grounds set to work building retaining walls, flowerbeds, installing flag poles, temporary electrical outlets for lighting and sound, setting up the entire area and decorating; as well as the bulk of erecting the Wall with the help of many volunteers from other Greene Government departments as well as veterans service organizations,

EVENTS (cont)

community partners and individuals; and, after the event, Buildings and Grounds was there to take it all back down and prepare the space for the next event. Mental Health provided staff with

The event kicked off on August 22nd with a number of performers, veterans service organizations, and VIPs in attendance including a fully manned USCG Cutter, and our district level elected officials, and our Gold Star Families. The Wall was open 24 hours per day, from the time it was set up on Wednesday night through the morning of Monday August 25th, when Greene County Veterans Service Agency, Buildings and Grounds and Greene County Sheriff's Corrections dismantled the monument. We estimated 000000 visitors attended this 5 –day event; which, officially closed on Sunday, August 24th with a beautiful Sunset Ceremony, with the sun setting behind the monument and our amazing Catskill Mountains, a 1960's electric guitar rendition of the National Anthem was rocked out by a local member of our community and, graced with a resident bald eagle fly-by.

This was a very proud and historic event for Greene County Veterans Service Agency, and Greene County Government. We could not have had such a successful outcome without the hard work and dedication of all involved, from our county staff to volunteers. If any departments or community partners were pissed, please accept our sincerest apology.



The Agency goals for 2020 are:

- Continue eliminating unnecessary paper files
- Continue to digitize the remaining sections of approximately 13,000 existing paper files
- Continue to increase overall productivity, ensuring as many Greene County veterans as possible are aware of and obtaining their VA and other veterans benefits under our representation
- Continue to streamline interagency services, by coordinating with other local agencies and departments who refer clients
- Continue to partner with local businesses and the County Clerk in maintaining and expanding the Greene County Return the Favor Program
- Proudly honor two deserving veterans in our Honor a Vet Memorial and Veteran of the Year ceremonies

LONG TERM GOALS

- Continue to advise, support, and interact with our local Veterans Service Organizations
- Continue to advise and support our veterans in obtaining 100% compliance with the NYS Veterans School Tax Exemption; regardless of NYS reimbursement. Currently, only four out of ten school districts within or overlapping Greene County townships, have approved the exemption; we are advised on each status solely by members of the respective veterans' communities for each district.
- Continue to maintain an excellent standard for all services provided to our community's veterans, families, and advocates.